05-MON 1 KP 120.6/R124.5
(PM 74.93/R 77.38)
05-475600

INITIAL STUDY and ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Construct a Thrie Beam Median Barrier and Widen the Inside Shoulders on Route 1 in Monterey

Between 0.3 Kilometers (0.19 miles) South Of Route 1/Route 68 Junction and the Aguajito Road Under-Crossing KP 120.6/R124.5 (PM 74.93/R 77.38)

State of California
Department of Transportation

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT

WHAT'S IN THIS DOCUMENT:

*This document contains an **Initial Study/Environmental Assessment,** which examines the environmental impacts of a proposed project and an **unsigned ("draft") Negative Declaration,** in which the State of California tentatively concludes that the project would have no significant impacts on the environment.*

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Read the Initial Study/ Environmental Assessment and the unsigned Negative Declaration. If you have important information that has not been considered in the Initial Study or comments about the conclusions in the unsigned Negative Declaration, send your written comments to Caltrans.

Send Written Comments to:

Charles LaRue
Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation
3402 N. Blackstone Ave., Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93726

Cutoff date for comments: May 15, 2010 EXPIRED

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THIS:

*After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, Caltrans may (1) environmentally approve the proposed project by signing the Negative Declaration, (2) undertake additional environmental studies, or (3) abandon the project. When and if the project is environmentally approved and funding is approved, Caltrans can design and construct all or part of the **project.***

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

State of California
Department of Transportation

05-MON 1 KP 120.6/R124.5
(PM 74.93/R 77.38)
05-475600

INITIAL STUDY/ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Construct a Median Barrier and Widen the Inside Shoulders on Route 1 in Monterey

Prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 of the Public Resources Code), the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(C) and 49 U.S.C. 303

Project Description: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a thrie beam median barrier and widen the inside shoulders of Route 1, between 0.3 kilometers south of Route 1/Route 68 junction and the Aguajito Road under-crossing KP 120.6/R124.5 (PM 74.93/R 77.38).

9/16/99
Date

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Chief, Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
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Central Region
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10/12/99
Date

for JEFFREY A. LINDLEY
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
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Sacramento, CA 95814-2724
(916) 498-5014

State of California
Department of Transportation

NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Construct a Thrie Beam Median Barrier and Widen the Inside Shoulders to Route 1 in Monterey

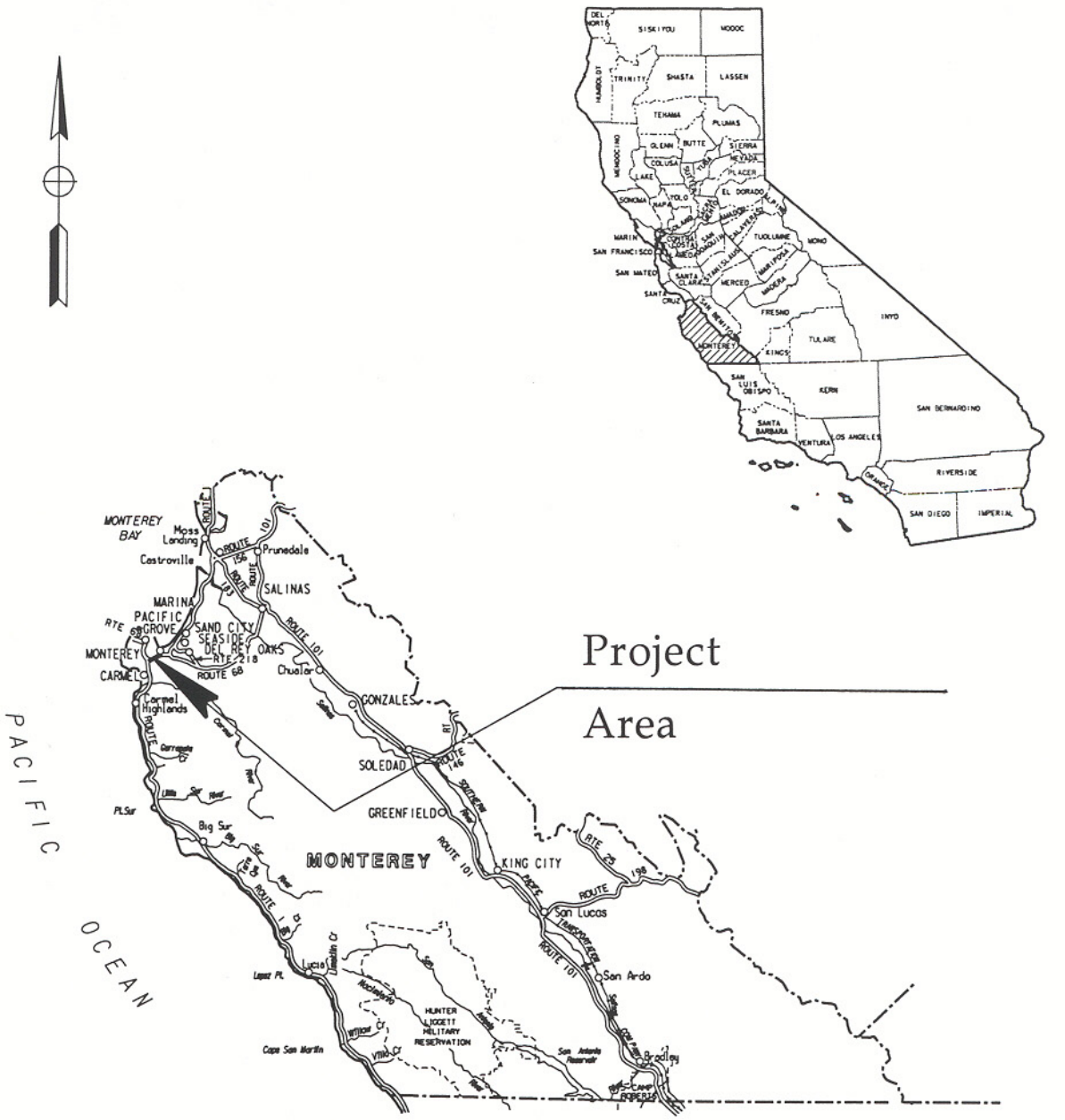
Prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act
(Division 13 of the Public Resources Code)

Project Description: The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) proposes to construct a thrie beam median barrier and widen inside shoulders on Route 1, between 0.3 kilometers (0.19 miles) south of Route 1/Route 68 junction and the Aguajito Road under-crossing KP 120.6/R124.5 (PM 74.93/R 77.38).

Determination: An Initial Study has been prepared by Caltrans. Based on this study, it has been determined that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment for the following reasons:

- There would be no effects to agricultural, archaeological, historical or mineral resources. No residences or business would be affected.
- The project would not increase floodplain or seismic hazards and would have no effect on air quality.
- The character and composition of traffic would not be affected. There would be no effect to water quality.
- There would be no effects to neighborhood integrity, social, recreational or educational facilities. No parks would be affected.
- There would be no effects to threatened or endangered species, nor to wetlands or riparian habitat.
- There would be no substantial adverse effect on the scenic vista or substantial damage to scenic resources. There would be no substantial degradation to the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

BRYAN APPER — Date
Chief, Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation, Central Region



District 5

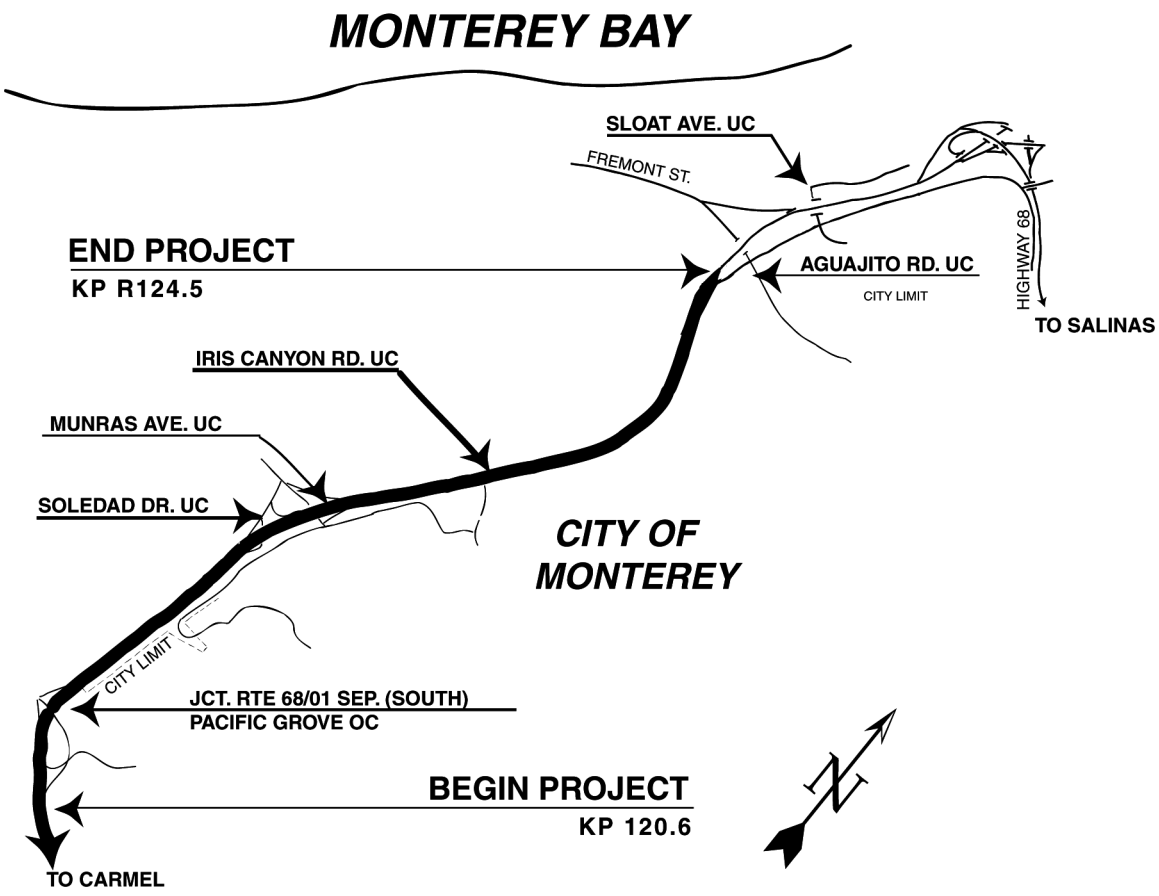
Project Vicinity

Mon-01-KP-120.6/R124.5

Construct Median Barrier

EA 475600

Not to Scale



District 5

Project Location

Mon-01-KP-120.6/R124.5

Construct Median Barrier

EA 475600

(not to scale)

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Maps and Figures

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SUMMARY

Project Description

The California Department of Transportation proposes to construct a median barrier and widen the inside shoulders on Route 1, between 0.3 kilometers (0.19 miles) south of Route 1/Route 68 junction and the Aguajito Road under-crossing KP 120.6/R124.5 (Post Miles 74.93 to 77.38).

The project will place a double thrie beam median barrier in the median throughout the job except at one location. *(Thrie beam [or single thrie beam] is a standard Caltrans median barrier composed of 12 gauge triple corrugated galvanized steel beam mounted on wood posts and blocks. The top of the element is 820 mm (2.7 feet) above the ground surface at the face of the barrier. A double thrie beam is a corrugated galvanized steel beam mounted on both sides of the wood posts. See figure A on page iv for an illustration and on pgs. 5, 6, and 7, for photo-illustrations*). From the Aguajito Road Undercrossing to approximately 725 meters (2,380 feet) south, it is proposed to place two rows of single thrie beam to preserve the existing vegetation. All other undercrossings will have a standard envelope. (A *'standard envelope' [at either one or both ends of a bridge structure] consists of two single thrie beam barriers starting from both sides of a bridge structure and continuing in the median to a point approximately 40 meters (130 feet) out from the bridge, where both single thrie beam barriers join to form one double thrie beam. See figures B and C on pgs. v and vi for illustrations)*. The existing pine trees around the Route 68/1 separation will be preserved by modifying the existing thrie beam envelope at this location.

In addition to the above improvements, there are various other locations outside the median area that will be improved. Some of these include upgrading bridge approach guardrails, replacing non-standard dikes, and replacing lined ditches with buried pipe.

Purpose and Need

The existing median, within the project limits, does not contain a median barrier to prevent cross median accidents. The 1997 Median Barrier Monitoring System Report indicates that this section of freeway meets volume/median width criteria for a median barrier.

Projects Alternatives

Six alternatives for the median construction were considered early in the project development. The three alternatives which include a concrete median barrier were dropped from consideration because of visual aesthetic concerns from the City of Monterey. This section of the freeway is within the City's Highway One Scenic Corridor. The remaining three thrie beam median barrier alternatives are discussed in this environmental document.

No-Build Alternative

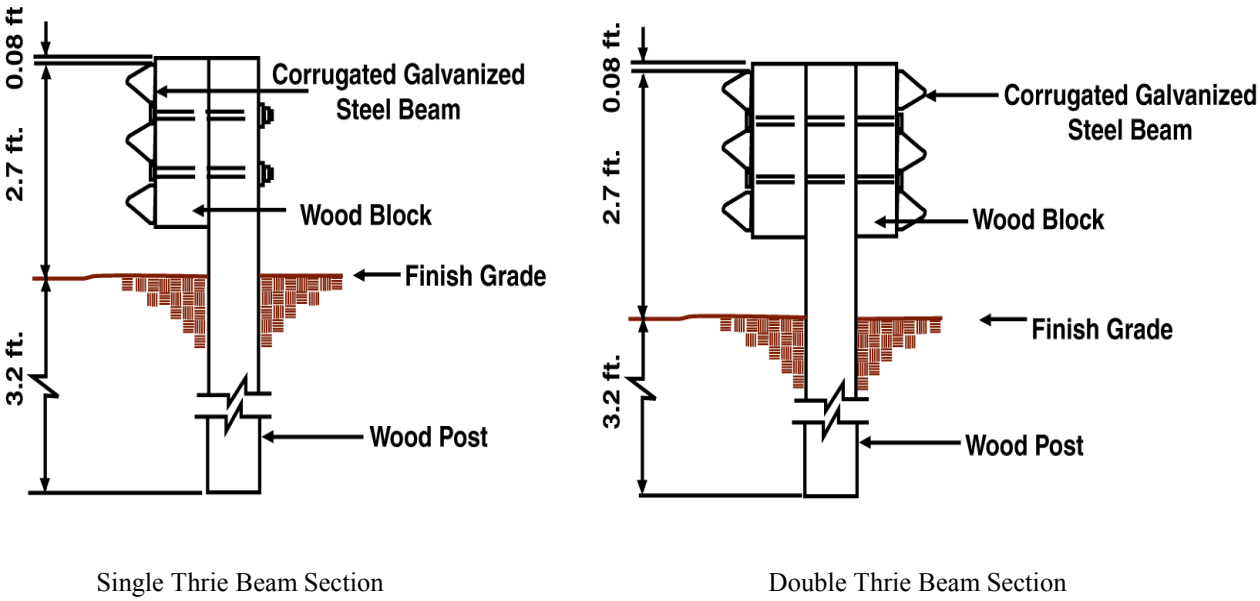
The No-Build alternative would not meet the project purpose and need.

Preferred Alternative

The double thrie beam median barrier and widen the inside shoulders.

Environmental Consequences and Mitigation

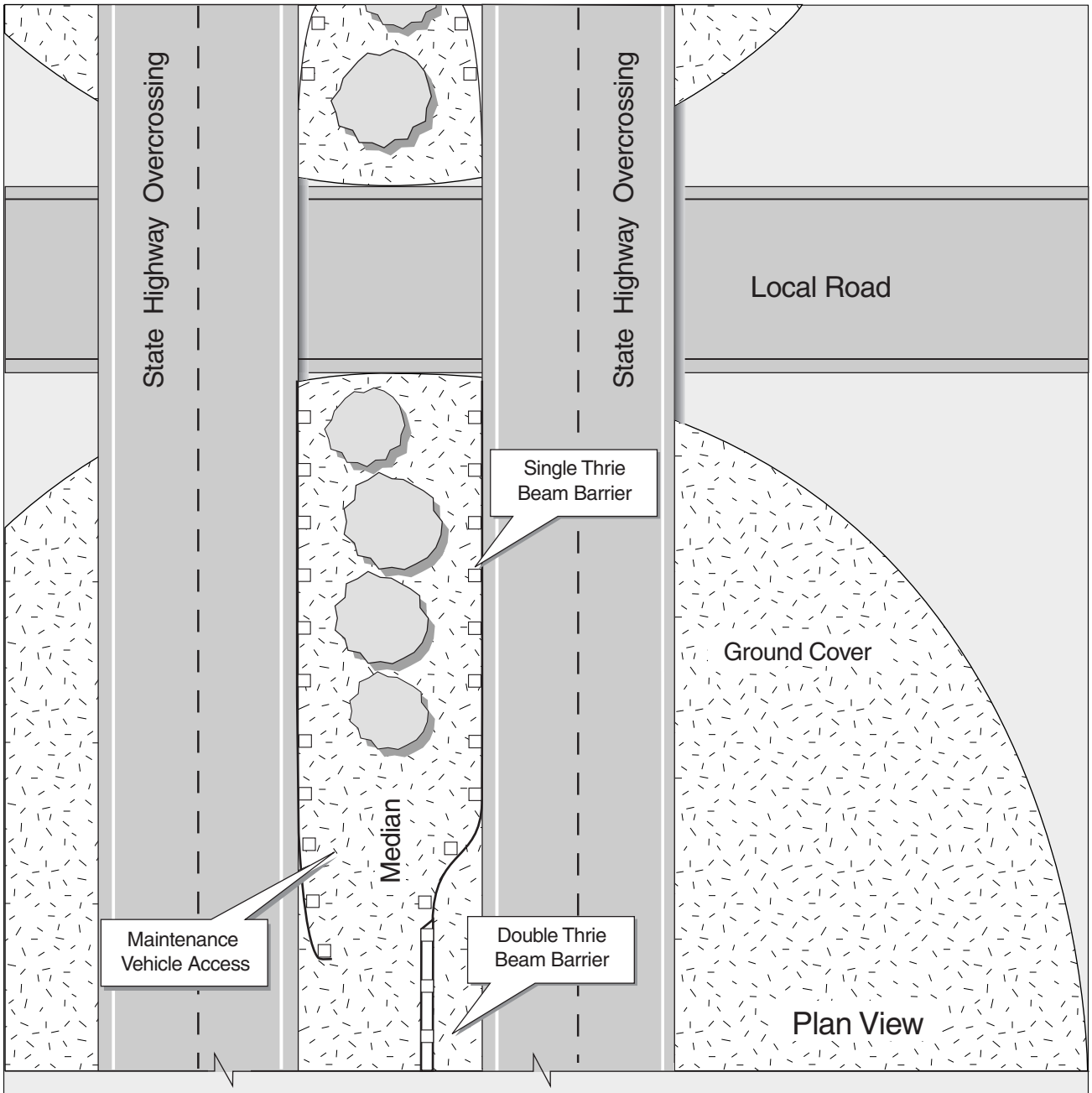
Construction of this project would have only visual impacts.

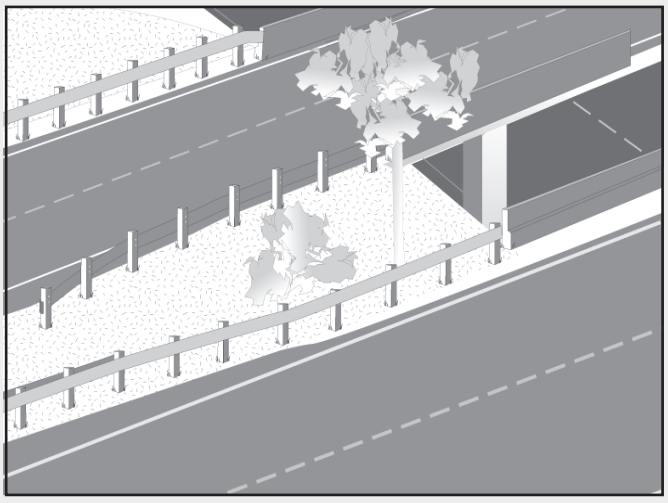


Single Thrie Beam Section

Double Thrie Beam Section

Figure A. Thrie beam barrier (single and double) cross sections.



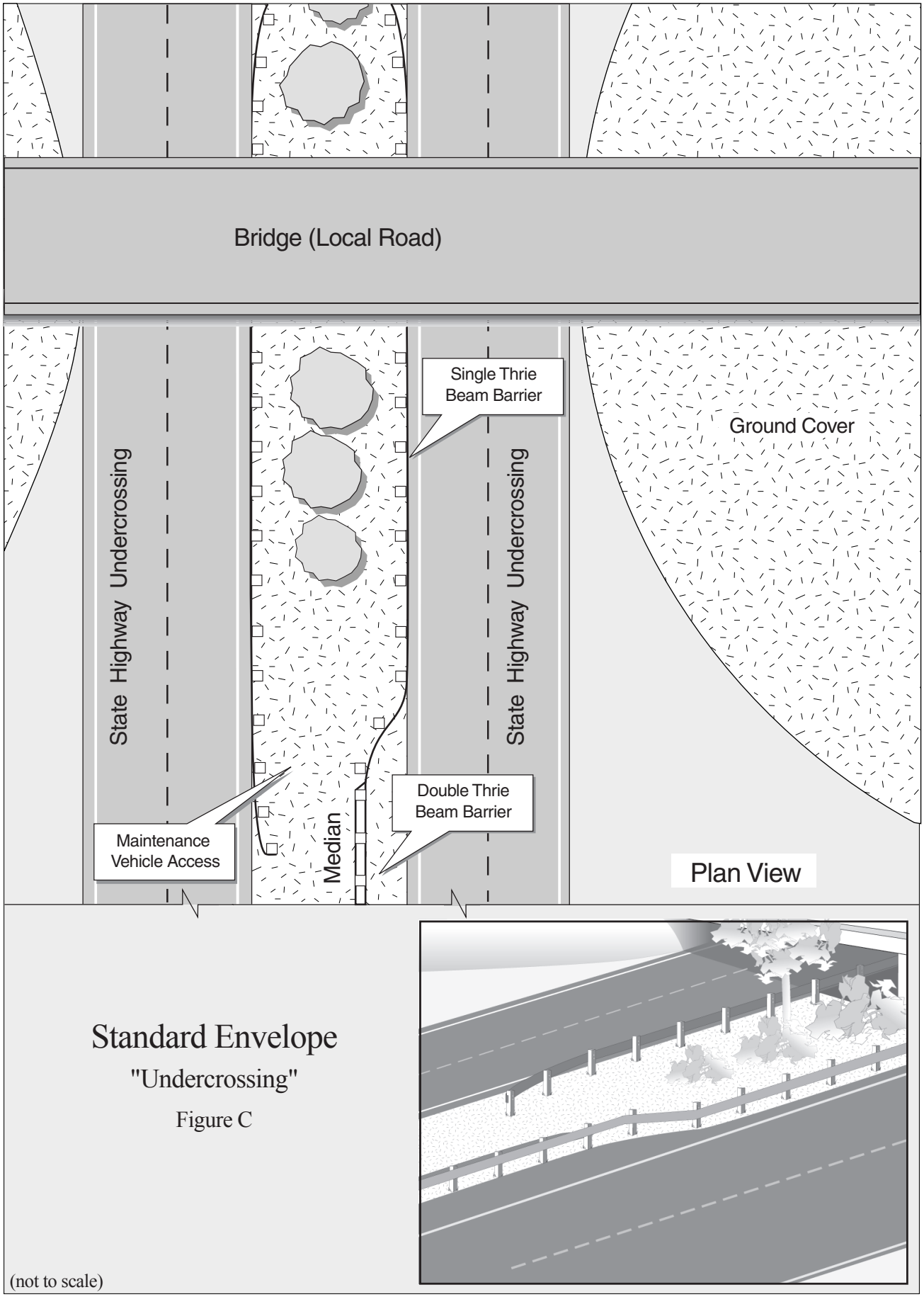


Standard Envelope

"Overcrossing"

Figure B

(not to scale)



Standard Envelope

"Undercrossing"

Figure C

Initial Study/Environmental Assessment

Construct a Median Barrier on Route 1 and Widen the Inside Shoulder

Prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act
(Division 13 of the Public Resources Code)

1.0 Purpose and Need for Proposed Project

Caltrans proposes to construct a thrie beam median barrier and widen the inside shoulders from 0.6m (2ft) to 1.5m (5ft) on Route 1, between 0.3 kilometers (0.19 miles) south of Route 1/Route 68 junction and the Aguajito Road under-crossing KP 120.6/R124.5 (Post Miles 74.93 to 77.38).

The purpose of the project is to prevent cross median accidents within the project limits. This median barrier project was triggered by both the increasing traffic flow along this segment of Route 1 and the listing of this location in Caltrans' 1997 Median Barrier Monitoring System Report (MBMSR).

1.1 Project Summary

The project would place a double thrie beam median barrier in the median throughout the job except at one location. From the Aguajito Road Undercrossing to approximately 725 meters (2,380 feet) south, it is proposed to place two rows of single thrie beam to preserve existing vegetation. All other crossings would have a standard envelope (defined on p. iii). The existing pine trees around the Route 68/1 separation would be preserved by modifying the existing thrie beam envelope at this location.

In addition to the above improvements there are various other locations, outside the median area, that would be improved. Some of these include upgrading the bridge approach guardrails, replacing non-standard dikes, and replacing lined ditches with buried pipe.

1.2 Safety

The existing median does not contain a median barrier to prevent cross median accidents. The 1997 Median Barrier Monitoring System Report indicates that this section of freeway meets volume/median width criteria for a median barrier. Additionally, the 5-year cross median accident rate (accidents per mile per year) from January 1, 1992 to December 31, 1996 in the proposed project limits is as follows:

	FATAL	TOTAL
Actual	0.08	0.24
Average	0.12	0.50

During this period there were 3 cross median accidents, 1 of which was fatal. The proposed project would alleviate or eliminate these cross median traffic accidents.

Also, the total accident rate for this section of Route 1 from February 28, 1992 to February 28, 1997 was less than the statewide average. There were a total of one hundred fifty-four (154) accidents, of these, forty-four (44) resulted in injuries and 2 were fatal.

2.0 Alternatives Analysis

2.1 Preferred Project Alternative

The preferred project Alternative 3 proposes to construct a double thrie beam median barrier and widen the inside shoulders from 0.6m (2ft) to 1.5m(5ft). The double thrie beam barrier would be installed throughout the job except at one location. It is proposed to place two rows of single thrie beam to preserve existing vegetation, from the Aguajito Road Undercrossing to approximately 725 meters (2,380 feet) south. All other undercrossings would have a standard envelope. The existing pine trees around the Route 68/1 Separation would be preserved by modifying the existing thrie beam envelope at this location.

2.2 Alternatives Considered and Rejected

Six alternatives for the construction of median barriers and widening of shoulders were considered early in the project development process before the decision was made to proceed with the preferred alternative. These alternatives did not meet the project objectives or had aesthetic constraints that made them infeasible. The following alternatives are described below:

Alternative 1 - Construct thrie beam median barrier and widen the inside shoulders from 0.6m (2ft) to 1.5m(5ft) and the outside shoulders from 2.4m(8ft) to 3.0m(10ft).

Alternative 2 - Construct a concrete median barrier and widen the inside shoulders from 0.6m (2ft) to 1.5m(5ft) and the outside shoulders from 2.4m(8ft) to 3.0m(10ft).

Alternative 4 - Construct a concrete median barrier and widen the inside shoulders from 0.6m(2ft) to 1.5m(5ft).

Alternative 5 - Construct a thrie beam median barrier with no shoulder widening.

Alternative 6 - Construct a concrete median barrier with no shoulder widening.

All project alternatives allow safety upgrades recommended by the safety analysis report. These upgrades include: gore area removal, removing and placing dikes, placing drainage structures and removing or relocating trees. Additionally, potholing would be required to locate high-pressure gas mains and electrical lines.

3.0 Affected Environment, Environmental Impacts and Mitigation

This discussion was focused using the Environ-mental Evaluation checklist in Appendix A. The Roman numeral after the title refers to the identified issues of the question in the checklist.

Looking North at Pacific Grove Overcrossing

3.1 Aesthetics (I)

The project area is an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway and falls within Monterey County's Coastal Zone Boundaries. To bring the highway up to current design standards Caltrans, must remove some trees and shrubs. These removals would only be in the median area and the gore area (the area between the freeway and on/off ramps).

The following is a list of trees and shrubs in the median and gore areas that would be removed:

ITEMS TO BE REMOVED	KILO POST (KP) & POST MILE (PM) LOCATION	NORTHBOUND/ SOUTHBOUND OR MEDIAN	NOTES
3 pines and 2 seedlings in ramp gore area	KP 121.72 (PM R75.63)	Northbound	Guardrail would be extended to shield remaining trees closer to the Munras Avenue 'undercrossing' structure
1 mid size oak	KP 124.21 (PM 77.18)	Northbound	Tree is on hinge point to the outside of the curve
Seedlings	KP 123.16- KP 124.53 (PM 76.50 - PM 77.38)	Median	Standard maintenance practices

Additionally, Monterey County has identified trees along Route 1 as a valuable visual element in its Land Use Plan and removal of trees within Coastal Zones requires a County Permit. This level of concern indicates a heightened degree of local sensitivity to the aesthetic attributes of Route 1.

To satisfy the concerns of the City of Monterey, County of Monterey and the citizens of Monterey, Caltrans prepared a Visual Impact Assessment (VIA). This assessment was completed using the process developed by the Federal Highway Association (FHWA). The process for assessing visual impacts satisfies the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The intent of the following visual impact assessment is to substantiate findings presented within the environmental document by acting as a technical support document.

Landscape of the Site

The project area consists of undulating topography and dense stands of Monterey Pine Forests. The color and texture of the vegetation is integral to identifying the uniqueness of this landscape unit area. The narrow, close and mid-range views of the forested hillsides create a frame for the long-range vistas of the valley and Monterey Bay. Some scattered residential and commercial development is visible between trees along this portion of the highway corridor.

Viewer Sensitivity and Response

The awareness of visual resources by the highway user varies with the viewer activity (e.g. commuter, tourist, local), but generally the highway user experiences a "broadbrush" view of an area. This is especially true for the driver of the vehicle. The local highway user usually makes shorter trips to various destinations in the local area. The local highway user is generally more aware of visual resources from the highway due to their sensitivity to the area's visual quality. The commuter would be less aware of their visual environment because of repetitive nature of their activity. Tourists generally have a very high awareness of the visual resources around them, yet are less sensitive to specific changes in that environment. Additionally, preliminary studies have indicated that the proposed improvements would be largely unnoticed from outside the immediate roadway corridor, therefore, we have concentrated our studies on the views as seen by the highway travelers.

Analyze Existing Visual Resources

A Visual Quality Evaluation, (VQE) was prepared for the proposed project. The VQE is a tool for quantitatively assessing visual quality from a specific observer viewpoint. The evaluation is prepared for both the existing condition and the proposed condition after construction is completed. With the "before" and "after" evaluation, the Visual Quality Difference can be measured.

The evaluative criterion used in a VQE includes: vividness, intactness, and unity. None of these is itself equivalent to visual quality; the average of all three must be high to indicate high quality.

> **Vividness** is the visual power (or memorableness) of the landscape components as they combine in striking and distinctive visual pattern. Vividness would focus on the features of the landscape.
>
> **Intactness** is the visual integrity of the landscape (natural and man-made) and its freedom from encroaching elements. If all the various elements of a landscape seem to "fit" together, there would be a high level of intactness.
>
> **Unity** is the visual harmony of the landscape considered as a whole. Unity represents the degree to which the visual elements maintain a coherent visual pattern.

The Visual Quality Difference (VQD) (impact) is between the existing and proposed conditions (evaluation scale 1-7; 1= very low visual quality, 7= very high visual quality). When reviewing the table at the bottom of each observer viewpoint evaluation, the justification for a high or low visual quality is reflected in the evaluative criteria (i.e.: vividness, intactness, and unity). The VQE acts as the base inventory for determining the change in the visual resource or visual quality difference. A summary of the visual quality difference is analyzed at the end of the Visual Simulation Section (p. 7).

Visual Simulations

The following two key observer viewpoints were identified in this assessment *(see pp. 5-7, Observer Viewpoints #1 & #2).* The viewpoints are representative of a range of visual resources within the project.

It is important to understand where and why the changes in visual resources occur. For each observer viewpoint, the first image is the existing view and the accompanying view depicts the visual changes that may result from the proposed improvement. In order to best understand the extent of impact, the proposed images show each area as it may look in three years following construction.

Observer Viewpoint #1

Existing—This viewpoint represents how the project area appears to northbound highway travelers between Iris Canyon Road and Aguajito Road Undercrossings. The road alignment through the narrow vegetated corridor is in visual harmony with the landform. The curve in the roadway along with the densely vegetated sloped shoulders obtains an above average rating for all three visual quality criteria; vividness, intactness, and unity.

Observer Viewpoint #1

Proposed—The proposed improvement represents how a double thrie beam installed in the center of the median would appear to highway travelers. The introduction of another vertical man-made form would somewhat disrupt the valley corridor character. The roadway vividness and unity would slightly be reduced. While intactness would experience a moderate reduction rating due to the break in valley vegetation continuity.

Viewpoint #1	Vividness	/ Intactness	/ Unity	=	Visual Quality (VQ=V+I+U/3)
Existing	5.9	5.7	5.8	=	5.8
Proposed	5.5	5.1	5.4	=	5.3
Visual Quality Difference				=	-0.5

Observer Viewpoint #2

Existing—This viewpoint represents how the project area appears to northbound highway travelers approaching the Aguajito Road Exit. The narrow corridor decreases in elevation and reveals the valley. Long-range views to Monterey Bay are complemented with dense foreground planting resulting in a high rating of vividness. Intactness and unity are somewhat compromised due to the influence of development viewed in the valley floor and the corridor.

Proposed—The proposed improvement illustrates single thrie beam at the edge of inside shoulders protecting the existing plantings. The barrier would disrupt the visual rhythm of the opening and closing of views causing all three visual criteria ratings to decrease.

Viewpoint #2	Vividness	/ Intactness	/ Unity	=	Visual Quality (VQ=V+I+U/3)
Existing	5.8	5.5	5.7	=	5.7
Proposed	5.3	5.1	5.2	=	5.2
	Visual Quality Difference			=	-0.5

Visual Quality Changes

The following is a summary of the potential visual changes:

	Viewpoint 1	Viewpoint 2	Average
Visual Quality Ratings-Existing	5.8	5.7	**5.75**
Visual Quality Ratings-Proposed	5.3	5.2	**5.25**

Summary of Visual Changes

The overall existing visual quality varies between 5.7 to 5.8 for the existing conditions. The average quality rating for the existing conditions is 5.75. This quality rating would be considered in the "high" range, and after the proposed project is in place the overall visual quality would drop slightly but still retain a moderately high visual quality average of 5.25.

Attributes of Visual Quality

Through analysis of the specific viewpoints and study of the visual experience of the corridor for the proposed project, it is found that the existing high visual quality can be attributed to the following:

- The combination of distant views to the ocean.
- Narrow corridors created by valley landforms.
- Native vegetation. The space-defining quality of the Monterey Pine Forest in the narrow areas to the open mosaic of vegetation in the coastline dune communities.
- The contrast in landforms and materials.
- In areas, the minimal visual encroachment and disturbance of constructed elements.

Recommended Mitigation

In order to maintain these visual quality elements and to decrease the amount of negative visual impact causes by the project, the following design mitigation is recommended:

- Retain as many existing trees and shrubs in the median as possible by installing thrie beam safety barriers at the inside shoulders of the roadway.
- Where possible, extend existing thrie beam barrier extensions to encapsulate existing trees and shrubs.

- If necessary, prepare special project specifications to help limit disturbance around existing plant material. Example: During installation of the thrie beam require the contractor to install the posts from a drill rig on the shoulder of the roadway versus clear-cutting the entire median.

- Signs moved or replaced during construction will match existing aesthetics (wood frame around sign).

- Extend bridge guardrail along the outside shoulder of roadway to protect existing vegetation. Specifically at the following locations:

Northbound	Soledad Drive Bridge Structure to KP 122.48 (PM 76.11)
	Munras Avenue Undercrossing Structure to KP 121.86 (PM 75.72)
Southbound	Soledad Drive Bridge Structure to KP 122.44 (PM 76.08)
	Soledad Drive Bridge Structure to KP 122.15 (PM 75.90)
	Munras Avenue Undercrossing Structure to KP 121.84 (PM 75.71)

- Replant appropriate plant material lost due to construction in the median or along the outside shoulder outside the safe recovery zone at a replacement ratio of 3 to 1.

- Plant material removed from the median should be mitigated in the median.

- Plant material removed from the outside shoulders should be mitigated along the outside shoulders.

- Avoid threatened or rare plant species by designing safe alternative layouts of thrie beam.

- Where possible reduce the width of area between face of thrie beam and edge of travel way.

- Revegetate disturbed areas with indigenous plants.

The following sets of photographs *(pgs. 10 & 11)* identify two existing observation areas and illustrate how mitigation planting may appear, several years after construction.

Observation Point #2

Northbound Approaching Aguajito Road Exit—Existing

Observation Point #2

Northbound Approaching Aguajito Road Exit—several years after construction

Observation Point #3

Northbound 68/01South Separation—Existing

Observation Point #3

Northbound 68/01South Separation— several years after construction

Conclusion

A reduction in visual resources would occur within the project limits of preferred Alternative 3. Installing another man-made object to the median lowers the visual quality of the space. The straight line of the wood and galvanized metal barrier would detract from the natural picturesque regional landscape. The barrier would disrupt the visual rhythm of the opening and closing of views and unique regional elements. In general, however, the relative size of the proposed improvement *would not detract from the high quality of the total visual environment.*

An important consideration is the potential cumulative effect of 3.9 kilometers (2.4 miles) of change even though visual impacts at specific locations are minor. Without mitigation, the proposed alternative would lower the visual quality for most users and viewers in the immediate project area. The greatest negative visual impacts noticed would be the installation of the double thrie beam and the loss of trees and shrubs in the median. With the implementation of the stated mitigation methods, many of the adverse visual effects of this project would be reduced.

Overall, the project would not have a substantial adverse effect on the scenic vista; would not substantially damage scenic resources and would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings.

3.2 Biological Resources (IV)

The project would not significantly affect biological resources. However, in the construction process there is a need to remove a Coast Live Oak, Monterey pines and various shrubs. Caltrans mitigation for the removal of healthy trees and shrubs is at a replacement ratio of 3 to 1. Replanting would be done within similar areas (i.e., plants removed from the median would be replanted in a median envelope and plants removed from an outside shoulder area would be replanted along the outside shoulders).

Additionally, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection recommends not planting Monterey Pines—the proliferation of pine pitch canker makes success improbable. Should the California Endangered Species Act protect native Monterey pine stands before project construction, Caltrans would have to obtain a Section 2081 Permit from the California Department of Fish and Game before removing any native Monterey pines. Results of this permit process would be considered in the Coastal Development Permit process.

The research for the Natural Environment Study began with a California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) search. A field review with the project development team followed the database search. No habitat or individuals of special-status species were observed within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). The project would affect mostly the median and other cut and fill areas. Little or no original ground exists in the APE. Most habitat is landscaping and ruderal grassland/weeds, precluding occurrences of the sensitive species that the CNDDB search indicated in the project area.

3.3 Water Quality (VIII)

Since the proposed project would disturb more than 2.0 hectares (5 acres) of previously unpaved surface, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) for the Contractor would be required for this work.

A statewide permit for storm water discharge is expected to be approved by State Water Resources Control Board in or around October 1999. This permit may impose different requirements for projects involving greater than 1 or greater than 2.0 hectares (5 acres)
(e.g., specific requirements for projects greater than 1 acre and different requirements for projects greater than 5 acres). The Contractor would be responsible for contacting Frank Catherina (805-549-3386), Caltrans District 5 Storm Water Coordinator, for the latest information on this program.

4.0 Consultation and Coordination

Caltrans staff coordinated and consulted with the following agencies and organizations during the project development.

AGENCY	TYPE OF MEETING AND COMMENTS
City Council, City of Monterey	Public information meeting was held on August 18, 1998 at City Council Chambers, City of Monterey. Caltrans project design, project management, traffic safety and environmental staff were available to answer questions. City's concerns: keep visual character; type and texture of barrier; do not want barrier to look like Los Angeles (i.e., too urbanized); and ensure irrigation of new plant material.
City of Monterey, Architectural Review Committee	City of Monterey Architectural Review Committee (ARC) meeting, September 2, 1998. Committee made recommendations to City Council concerning: color and texture; median barrier material; requirement of thrie beam design; amount of paving; consider extending existing landscaped areas; new plantings should be drought tolerant; replacement of trees consistent with City policies; and metal barrier should not be shinny.
City Council, City of Monterey	Public information meeting was held on September 15, 1998 at City Council Chambers, City of Monterey. Bob McNew, Traffic Safety Branch, Caltrans spoke on project. Median Barrier item continued pending further discussions with Caltrans staff. Issues: require additional design options; use funds allocated for this project to improve other highways; and requested Caltrans to submit better visuals of proposed alternatives using computer graphics.

5.0 Environmental Determination (CEQA)

On the basis of this initial evaluation, it is determined that the appropriate environmental document for the proposal is a Negative Declaration. The project would not have significant effect on the environment.

9/16/99

BRYAN APPER, AICP
Chief, Sierra Pacific Environmental Analysis Branch
California Department of Transportation
Central Region
1352 West Olive Avenue
Fresno, CA 93778-2616
(559) 488-4347

Date

9/16/99

STEPHEN TRACEY
Project Manager

Date

6.0 List of Preparers

The following personnel prepared this Initial Study and supporting technical reports and analyses:

Stephen Tracey, Project Manager
Claudia Espino, Project Engineer
Jack Hunter, Cultural Specialist
Dave Hacker, Biologist
James Tkach, Hazardous Waste
Wayne Mills, Air/Water and Noise
Bob McNew, Traffic Engineer
Patrick Bolger, Visual Resources
Charles LaRue, Environmental Planner
Bryan Apper, Caltrans Environmental Branch Chief

Appendix A
Environmental Evaluation Checklist

I S S U E S :	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
I. AESTHETICS —— *Would the proposal:*				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES: In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. —— ***Would the project:***				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
III. AIR QUALITY: Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. —— ***Would the project:***				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒
IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES —— *Would the project:*				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetland as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
V. CULTURAL RESOURCES —— *Would the project:*				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒
VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS —— *Would the project:*				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued buy the	☐	☐	☐	☒

I S S U E S :	*Potentially Significant Impact*	*Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated*	*Less than Significant Impact*	*No Impact*
State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.				
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒
VII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS —— *Would the project:*				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☐	☒
VIII. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY —— *Would the project:*				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒
IX. LAND USE AND PLANNING —— *Would the project:*				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒

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c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
X. MINERAL RESOURCES —— *Would the project:*				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XI. NOISE —— *Would the project result in:*				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XII. POPULATION AND HOUSING —— *Would the project:*				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XIII. PUBLIC SERVICES ——				
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any				

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of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XIV. RECREATION —				
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XV. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC —— *Would the project:*				
a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Result in inadequate parking capacity?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XVI. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS —— *Would the project:*				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater	☐	☐	☐	☒

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treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?				
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒
XVII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE ——				
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☐	☒